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Book Review: Life on Mars: What to Know Before We Go

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Life on Mars : what to know before we go



Weintraub, David A. Princeton, 2018

302p index, 9780691180533 \$29.95, 9781400889945

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With all the robots exploring Mars and the growing talk about sending astronauts to the planet, many may wonder what all the fuss is about. Wonder no more. Weintraub (astronomy, Vanderbilt Univ.) offers a well-written and thoroughly researched book that deftly separates the historical, fictional Mars from our scientific understanding of the planet. At its core, *Life on Mars* is the story of humankind's quest to answer the deep question about the origin of life. Are we alone? Or is life common in the universe? As it is the most "Earth-like" known planet beyond our own and relatively nearby, it is logical to start with Mars. Without ignoring the interesting mistakes of scientists and the often-humorous misconceptions of nonscientists throughout history, Weintraub leads readers to the current evidence for and against past or present Martian life. He also raises the important concern that in our zest for exploration we must take care not to jeopardize what life, if any, may presently exist there. *Life on Mars* is a valuable lesson in how science is done that will appeal to readers interested in the search for life and, especially, the exploration of Mars.

Summing Up: Recommended. All readers.

Reviewer: T. D. Oswalt, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: All Readership Levels

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: Science & Technology - Astronautics & Astronomy

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